

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for dynamically extending a firewall, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) establishing by a local computer system a network connection with a remote computer system;
- (b) receiving at the local computer system through the network connection an identifier from the remote computer system; and
- (c) extending the firewall by using the identifier at the local computer system to filter information received through the network connection with the remote computer system.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) comprises initiating a serial network connection with the remote computer system.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) comprises:

- (a-a) contacting the remote computer system;
- (a-b) providing the remote computer system with authentication credentials; and
- (a-c) receiving a serial network connection from the remote computer system in response to the authentication credentials.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) comprises:

- (b-a) requesting ~~an~~ the identifier from the remote computer system; and
- (b-b) receiving ~~an~~ the identifier in response to the request.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the identifier from the remote computer system is an Internet Protocol (IP) address.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises ~~the steps of~~:
- (c-a) receiving a packet of information from the remote computer system;
  - (c-b) examining the packet of information to determine its destination address;
  - (c-c) comparing the destination address to the identifier received from the remote computer system;
  - (c-d) accepting the packet if its destination address matches the identifier; and
  - (c-e) rejecting the packet if its destination address does not match the identifier.
7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the remote computer system chooses the identifier ~~transmitted~~ from a pool of identifiers.
8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
- (d) assigning the identifier received from the remote computer system to the local computer system.
9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:
- (e) receiving a second identifier from the remote computer system;
  - (f) assigning the second identifier to service management logic on the local computer system; and
  - (g) using the second identifier to filter information received through the network connection with the remote computer system.
10. (Currently Amended) A method for dynamically extending a firewall, the method comprising the steps of:
- (a) receiving at a local computer system a network connection from a remote computer system;
  - (b) receiving at the local computer system through the network connection an identifier from the remote computer system; and
  - (c) extending the firewall by using the identifier at the local computer system to filter information received through the network connection with the remote computer system.
11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein step (a) comprises the initiation of a serial network connection by a the remote computer system.

12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein step (a) comprises:
- (a-a) receiving a call from the remote computer system;
  - (a-b) receiving authentication credentials from the remote computer system; and
  - (a-c) initiating a serial network connection with the remote computer system in response to the authentication credentials.
13. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein step (b) comprises:
- (b-a) requesting ~~an~~ the identifier from the remote computer system; and
  - (b-b) receiving ~~an~~ the identifier in response to the request.
14. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the identifier from the remote computer system is an Internet Protocol (IP) address.
15. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein step (c) comprises ~~the steps of~~:
- (c-a) receiving a packet of information from the remote computer system;
  - (c-b) examining the packet of information to determine its destination address;
  - (c-c) comparing the destination address to the identifier received from the remote computer system;
  - (c-d) accepting the packet if its destination address matches the identifier; and
  - (c-e) rejecting the packet if its destination address does not match the identifier.
16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the remote computer system chooses the identifier ~~transmitted~~ from a pool of identifiers.
17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of:
- (d) assigning the identifier received from the remote computer system to the local computer system.
18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of:
- (e) receiving a second identifier from the remote computer system;
  - (f) using the second identifier to filter information received through the network connection with the remote computer system; and
  - (g) assigning the second identifier to service management logic on the local computer system.

19. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the network connection comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) network connection.
20. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the local computer system comprises a fault-tolerant computer system.
21. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the local computer system and the remote computer system are connected via a local area network (LAN).
22. (New) The method of claim 2 wherein the serial network connection comprises a Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP) network connection.
23. (New) The method of claim 10 wherein the network connection comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) network connection.
24. (New) The method of claim 10 wherein the local computer system comprises a fault-tolerant computer system.
25. (New) The method of claim 10 wherein the local computer system and the remote computer system are connected via a local area network (LAN).
26. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the serial network connection comprises a Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP) network connection.